

THE Baptist Record

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New and improved

Refurbished Garaywa expecting big summer

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Veterans of Garaywa Camp and Conference Center will appreciate the sprucing up of the campus in Clinton as the camp prepares for a busy summer camping season.

From a facilities standpoint, visitors will first notice the new paint on the buildings. "Because of the hailstorm and what insurance is covering, our guest house, trading post, shop, dining hall, auditorium are all being painted," said manager Roddy Reed. "Volunteers will help paint the cabins and bathhouses. We've had to repair shingles on the roofs. Last year we were tied up with our guesthouse. It has new floors and other updates."

The most obvious change on the campus is the new swimming pool. The old, 40's-era pool had seen better days and was completely demolished during the camping off-season.

"It was ripped out and the new one put in," said Reed. "There is new plumbing, new fence, and new pumps and filters. There is a new pump house. There are new slides. On one end, there is a 'vortex' slide which makes a 360-degree turn."

While professional contractors and workmen have been doing their work, Garaywa has been the beneficiary of much volunteer help. This was especially true with the guesthouse.

"We started work on the guesthouse about a year ago," said Reed. "It mushroomed into a big



EXCITING RIDE — A young camper at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton enjoys an adrenaline-charged moment on the Mississippi Baptist encampment's zipline during recreation time. Garaywa offers a full program for girls during the course of the summer. (Special to The Baptist Record)

project but we had teams from Carroll-Montgomery Association; North Oxford Church; Longview Church in Pontotoc; and from First Church, Raymond. There were a few individuals who also came in, here and there.

The group from Carroll-Montgomery comes every year, and they'll be here in May. The group from North Oxford Church will be here May 12. They'll help us build

see GARAYWA on p. 11

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Force mobilized

At press deadline for this issue of The Baptist Record, the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force was mobilizing in response to the severe weather outbreak across Mississippi on the afternoon and evening of April 28. A number of task force teams were dispatched overnight to hard-hit areas, and more teams will likely be activated as damage assessments are completed.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is accepting financial donations to assist the victims of the violent weather. Checks should be made payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, with "Miss. Disaster Relief" noted on the memo line. The address to mail donations is Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. On-line donations can be made at mbcb.org/giving.

"In-kind" donations such as food, clothing, or equipment are not being accepted at this time.

For more information, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at (601) 292-3335 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 335. E-mail: dvil@mbcb.org.

Equality campaign coming to Miss., HRC announces

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is committing \$8.5 million and dedicating a staff of 20 people to "dramatically expand LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) equality" in Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas, according to the group's president.

"Right now, this country is deeply divided into two Americas — one where LGBT equality is nearly a reality and the other where LGBT people lack the most fundamental measures of equal citizenship.

"Project One America is an unparalleled effort to close that gap, and it opens up a bold, new chapter in the LGBT civil rights movement of this generation," announced Chad Griffin in an April 26 press release. "In this grand struggle for equality, we can't write off anyone, anywhere."

The press release noted three areas on which Washington, D.C.-based HRC, which claims to have 10,000 members in Mississippi, will focus in the campaign for their version of equality in the state:

■ Changing hearts and minds.

■ Advancing "enduring" legal protections.

■ Building more inclusive institutions for LGBT people "from the church pew to the work place."

"HRC Mississippi will be anchored by full-time staff and dedicated in-state office space to guarantee a round-the-clock effort," the press release states.

At least one Mississippi Baptist pastor agrees with the HRC campaign. Stan Wilson, pastor of Northside Church in Clinton, was quoted in the HRC press release as saying, "I am only one of many clergy from across the state of Mississippi who are [sic] deeply committed to equality for all people. I believe this project will reveal the multitudes of people who want Mississippi to be a fair and equitable state."

Jimmy Porter, executive di-

rector of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission in Jackson, strongly opposes the HRC's stated goals.

"Until God makes an addendum to the Bible as it is written, and changes His teachings on marriage and unnatural sexual behavior, we will continue to follow His instructions in this matter and not the warped views of man."

The Christian Action Commission has and will continue to support and fight for the biblical view of marriage as defined in the creation story of Genesis and consistently demonstrated throughout the remaining Scriptures."

Porter said many Bible passages warn of the consequences of immoral sexual behavior, and he pointed specifically to Romans 1:24-27.

"The ultimate goal of the homosexual community and the Human Rights Campaign is to strip away a portion of our Mississippi Constitution that defines marriage as between one man and one woman," he added.

For more information on the Christian Action Commission, visit christianaction.com.

Inside this issue

Directions

Sunday School lessons

Editorial

Bible study

How to Become a Christian

Revivals & Homecoming

Just for the Record

Classifieds

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

We need Him today

Every generation likely believes they have been witnesses to the pinnacle of man's inhumanity to man. The Civil War, where advanced weaponry met outdated tactics, would be one extreme example. There was World War I and the widespread use of devastating chemical warfare. For sheer volume of brutality on a global scale, World War II would be difficult to match.

Today's world situation must rank somewhere close to the top, however, because of the global targeting of innocent non-combatants. We live in a time that allows stateless terrorist groups to move about in the shadows, picking off children and people going about their normal business.

Many a day goes by without another report of homicide, bombing somewhere destroying not only himself but everyone around him. Unarmed humanitarian doctors are slaughtered by people who are supposed to be protecting them. Radical fundamentalists applaud the murders of more than 3,000 people killed on 9/11, and declare that God is glorified by such acts.

Our own home-grown terrorists feel no sympathy for the innocent, either. In the case of Timothy McVeigh, even on death row he cynically declared the babies murdered in his bombing of Oklahoma City's Murrah Federal Building as nothing more than "collateral damage."

Meanwhile, the streets of many of our great American metropolises are coming to be ruled by ruthless gangs willing to do anything to anybody who stands between them and their wildly lucrative drug business. Police are often outmanned and outgunned, and considered by these people as just another obstacle to be eliminated by whatever means necessary.

Has human life ever been worth less? Has human depravity ever gone lower? Have we ever been farther away from our Creator and Father? Perhaps, but there's no doubt the world is in bad shape at the moment.

If we ever needed a Prince of Peace, we need Him today.

We need a Prince of Peace to still the violence that destroys so many people — many of whom go into eternity without salvation. We need a Prince of Peace to compel combatants to lay down their weapons so food and medicine and the Gospel can get to the people who need it most, because that's inarguably more important than political grievances.

We need a Prince of Peace to teach us that the differences setting us against one another are only skin deep, and that the love of our Heavenly Father goes much deeper than that. We need a Prince of Peace to show us how to turn the other cheek, and how two wrongs don't make a right. We need a Prince of Peace to demonstrate for us how we should raise our children and treat our elders, because we seem to have allowed that knowledge to slip away.

We need a Prince of Peace to intercede for the very young and the very old, who we despise so much for the inconvenience they create.

We need a Prince of Peace to help us overcome the pettiness in our small lives, and invite us to become a part of something much bigger and infinitely more important than ourselves. We need a Prince of Peace to keep us focused on the main thing and deliver us from the snares and distractions of the Evil One: money, power, sex, ego, and self-centeredness, to name only a few.

Thank God we have been given just such a Prince of Peace in Jesus Christ — a Prince of Peace who, because he walked among us as one of us, understands us better than we understand ourselves. Thank God we have a Prince of Peace who serves even today as the perfect example of what our Heavenly Father expects of us. Thank God that our Prince of Peace is sufficient to defeat the Evil One and save us from an eternity of damnation.

Let us lift our voices in praise to God and Son, and pray that all the people of the world will one day soon know the peace we know that has been so freely given to us by the Savior.

Hail, Prince of Peace!



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

A life transformed

I was saved as a young adult in a small, Southern Baptist church in Beaufort, S.C. Early in my church experience, I heard about and saw our church willingly and gladly invest 10% of our undesignated gifts through the Cooperative Program in spite of having many financial needs herself.

It was exciting to hear and read how our financial and prayer support helped place our missionaries in North America and around the world. In theory, I learned the value of partnering together as churches to take the Gospel to the uttermost part of the world.

In my early 30s, God called me into the ministry. In spite of our associational missionary's urging that I should get some education, I told him all I needed was a church. God called me to my first church in Bluffton, S.C. The church had all but died, so I couldn't do much more harm with no more training and experience than I possessed.

Even though we were small in number, the church's commitment to missions through our Cooperative Program was very strong. Missionaries on furlough would speak to our church and I still remember the excitement created by seeing and hearing from missionaries we supported through our Cooperative Program giving.

Then God called me to pursue my education. Through the process of undergraduate and graduate studies, my theoretical understanding of the Cooperative Program became more personal and more of a conviction. I discovered that the Cooperative Program helped financially support my theological education.



Guest opinion
with Bill Pritchett

I benefited personally from the generosity of thousands of other churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

As the years unfolded, the genius of the Cooperative Program became more apparent. The value of the Cooperative Program to the mission of Southern Baptists to take the Gospel to the end of the age is unparalleled, except for the work of the Holy Spirit and prayer.

The strength of partnering and cooperating together as Southern Baptists to give, pray, and go on mission is evident nowhere more than in our Cooperative Program.

During these challenging financial times — yet golden days of opportunity — Southern Baptists can turn "the world upside down" (Acts 17:6, HCSB) for Christ by strengthening our resolve to give 10% and beyond through our Cooperative Program.

Giving through the Cooperative Program helps reach, touch, and transform lives. I believe in the Cooperative Program because I'm one such life.

Pritchett is pastor of Southside Church in Andalusia, Al. His commentary appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.

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Christians and sexuality subjects of ERLC summit

NASHVILLE (BP) — Pastors and other evangelical Christians should speak biblically and live purely to minister faithfully in a sex-saturated culture, speakers said at a Southern Baptist-sponsored summit on the Gospel and sexuality.

In addresses during the three-day conference, speakers challenged participants with messages designed to equip church leaders and other Christians to live with purity while aiding people inside and outside the church who are captive to a sexualized society.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) sponsored its inaugural Leadership Summit in sessions April 21-23 at its headquarters in the Southern Baptist Convention building in Nashville.

Not yet saturated

As sexualized as American culture is, it does not appear to be at the saturation point, ERLC President Russell D. Moore said. "In terms of the entire society, I don't think we're there yet, because I think that what's happening is that technology is making the sexual revolution more and more elastic," he said during a panel discussion on ministry in a sex-permeated culture.

Moore said he suspects that "what we are going to find is there are a lot of people who have been promised a kind of easy gospel of sexual freedom who are going to be asking, 'What now? What's after this?' and so I think we need to be the sort of church and the sort of people who can be ready."

The summit, titled The Gospel and Human Sexuality, dealt with such issues as moral purity, marital sexuality, pastoral care for sexual immorality, pornography, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, sex trafficking, discussing sex with children and young people, and biblical manhood and womanhood.

J.D. Greear, lead pastor of The Summit Church in the Raleigh/Durham (N.C.) area, said presenting the beauty of the Gospel of Jesus is vital in dealing with sexuality and sexual sin. "The problem is not that our desire for sex is so strong but that our love for God is so weak," he said in a keynote speech on pastoral care for sexual sin.

"Our message cannot simply be, 'Stop having sex.' Our message has to be, 'Behold your God,'" Greear told the audience, which consisted of 205 registrants. "What you have to do is to be consumed with God and His work so much that it breaks the craving."

Irreparable harm

Various speakers pointed to the need for pastors to preach systematically through the Bible, and some pointed to the damage that preaching to address felt needs has done among evangelicals in recent decades.



STATE OF THE CULTURE — Pastor Jimmy Scroggins (right), senior pastor of First Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., comments during a panel discussion at the inaugural ERLC Leadership Summit April 21-23 at the Southern Baptist Convention building in Nashville. In the background are Greg Belser (left), pastor of Morrison Heights Church in Clinton, and J.D. Greear, lead pastor of The Summit Church in the Raleigh/Durham (N.C.) area. (BP photo)

"The generational effect of felt-needs preaching, the generational effect of preaching what we think people want to hear and not exalting the unique person and unique work of Jesus Christ has caused irreparable harm in the church world," said Kevin Smith, assistant professor of preaching at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and teaching pastor at Highview Church in Louisville.

"It's easy to scapegoat gay people," he said. "It's easy to scapegoat the culture war without proclaiming the Word of God from the pulpit to the people sitting in your congregation looking at your face."

Evangelicals should make certain they are speaking biblically and factually while befriending gays and lesbians, and when addressing homosexuality and same-sex marriage, speakers noted.

"The point is not homosexuality. The point is the Lordship of Jesus," Greear said.

"God doesn't send people to hell for homosexuality. He sends people to hell for self-rule and self-righteousness," he said.

Jimmy Scroggins, senior pastor of First church in West Palm Beach, Fla., said Christians should "reject redneck theology in all its forms," including jokes about "Adam and Steve."

Greatest moral crisis

The summit addressed the pervasiveness of pornography, especially among church leaders and other Christians.

Pornography "represents the greatest moral crisis in the history of the church," said Heath Lambert, executive director of

the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors and assistant professor of biblical counseling at Southern Seminary.

While there are all sorts of moral problems, "porn is something evangelicals can do in a dark room behind a shut door after they have rallied against homosexual marriage," he said during his keynote speech.

"I think the greatest threat to the church today is the Christian pastor, the Christian school teacher, the Christian college and seminary student who exalts sound theology, who points to the Bible, and then retreats to the basement computer" for an hour of pornography, Lambert told the audience.

The average age of a boy's first experience with hard-core pornography is 12, Lambert said. "We don't know what it is like to have a nation of men who are addicted to pornography."

David Prince, pastor of preaching at Ashland Avenue Church in Lexington, Ky., and associate professor of preaching at Southern Seminary, said he is convinced pornography is "devastating the spiritual vitality of our churches."

Pastor and seminary professor Tony Merida said Christians can battle sex trafficking by halting their consumption of pornography.

"I would go so far as to say if you are viewing pornography you are perpetuating the sex trafficking industry," said Merida, founding pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, N.C., and associate professor of preaching at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Pastors need to be accountable to others regarding pornography and to address their churches,

Lambert said. While practical strategies are needed, "[t]here is no grasp of porn that is so tight that the grace of Jesus cannot break it," he said.

Evangelicals need to awaken the culture to the problem, Lambert said. "[W]e need to dedicate ourselves to a decades-long fight to end this."

Women and porn

While discussion of pornography focused on the need of males to be on guard, Trillia Newbell said women should not be forgotten by pastors when they address the issue of pornography and other sexual sins.

Research from 2007 showed about 13 million women go to online porn sites each month, said Newbell, an author and the ERLC's consultant for women's initiatives. About one-third of visitors to adult entertainment websites are females, Newbell reported.

"There is a stereotype and a really, really, really bad rumor that women don't struggle with sexual sin — or so it appears," she said.

All Scripture is useful, "and therefore those [biblical] texts aren't meant for only men," but for women also, Newbell said.

25% using porn

The problem of pornography among evangelicals was reflected in research data presented by Mark Regnerus, an author and associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas-Austin. He cited research showing:

■ 25% of evangelical men report using pornography in the past week.

■ 14% of evangelical men report porn usage in the past day.

Regnerus also reported that more than 48% of evangelicals report having premarital sex with their spouse.

Leading families

Prince pointed to the Gospel in a keynote address about helping parents address their children's sexuality. "We are to have a distinctive, Christ-centered view of everything, including sexuality," he said. "Our approach can't be, 'Just say no.' That is not Christian sexuality. We want them to have a comprehensively, Christ-centered view of sexuality."

Among his recommendations, Prince encouraged parents to recognize sex education as an important part of Gospel education, to answer questions without hesitation when asked by their children, and to be the first to explain sexual intercourse to their children.

Smith said pastors and other Christians should address sexuality but with the "tone of Scripture" and "in ways that reflect God's glory."

"We must realize the oversexualization of our society can't lead to the a-sexualization of the church," he said. "We can't get to a place where the church doesn't talk about sex."

He urged the audience, some of whom were watching by live-stream, to avoid vulgarity and "ways that remove the mystery of the special intimacy between a husband and wife."

"I'm tired of preachers bragging about their 'hot wife,'" he said. "No. 1, hot is an objectifying term. There is nothing good, profitable, or godly about calling your wife hot in public. All it does is set up an examination."

"We're trying to heighten the conversation," Smith said. "We're not trying to make sex less dramatic. We're trying to make sex more dramatic."

No easy path

"The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not pretend that the path to sexual purity is easy," Moore said in his keynote address. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ says that the entire life of the Christian is one of bearing a cross, which is why we need the entire body of Christ... so that the stronger will bear up the weaker."

Everyone needs "not an 'almost gospel' but a whole Gospel that speaks to us truthfully of God's justice and truthfully of God's justification to understand and to know the joy of what it means to follow and to walk after Jesus, which means sometimes that we walk in places that don't seem to make sense..." Moore said.

An "almost gospel" is no match for the sexual revolution," he said.

Videos of the summit sessions are available online at <http://erlc.com/summit/videos>

For any of you who ever watch the Robertson family on Duck Dynasty, you are familiar with the fact that each episode closes with the family around the table and the patriarch beard of the group, Phil Robertson, saying, "Y'all bow." He leads them in a prayer of thanksgiving for the food whether it be squirrel stew or crawfish or frog legs. For those of you who may be of the uninitiated and don't have any idea what I'm talking about, or for those of you who have tried to watch and concluded this is the most bizarre thing you've ever seen, or those of you who were maybe repulsed by it, I would tell you again that the constant piece in each one of the TV programs is Phil saying, "Y'all bow."

Across the nation you can imagine over the several years they have been on TV they have received a lot of attention because of their praying as they sit down to eat and frequently praying "in Jesus's name." Still they continue to do it and they continue to be the most watched cable TV program in the USA and Canada. For whatever else you may think of the program or the family, it seems to me that it's nothing but good, the example they set in giving thanks to God before they dive in to eat. In this entitlement age, grab and go and give me more, never pausing to say thank you to anybody much less the God of heaven from whom every good and perfect gift flows, they are blessing many people by saying the blessing. God deserves our thanks.

I remember a story of years ago of a farm hand that was working on this farm during the summer. He pretty much lived with the farmer's family and participated in their activities



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Y'all Bow

from sunup to after dark. And it was all strange and new to him. They would pause to eat a big breakfast and they would give thanks for the new day and all that God had provided. They headed out into the fields and to the day's work sometimes miles away from the home place and they would pause to eat some prepared sandwiches. They would pray again thanking God for His provisions. Tired and weary after a long day of labor they would come in and would soon go sit down to a good meal. The visiting laborer asked the farmer's young son, "So, does everybody here on the farm pray before eating anything?" The boy thought and said, "No sir, the hogs don't."

In this land of plenty in which some who live at the poverty line are seen as greatly blessed by the rest of the world, we need to be participants in saying, "Thank You, God." We have so much; it really sets us apart from the

rest of the world for we have to worry more about eating too much than having too little. We need to thank God.

The other day I was in a restaurant waiting to eat and I saw a group of teenagers come in and sit down at a booth not far away from me. They too were waiting on their food. Then after a while I looked over and it caught my attention because all four of them were bowing. I thought they may be giving thanks for the food or just having prayer together and I thought, how special is that? It did my heart good, but as I watched I realized they were not praying or communicating with God. All four of them were sitting there with their heads down staring at their phones and texting someone. What a generational divide and a different day we live in. But if I could take this moment to encourage you, whether it's just by yourself or with kids or grandkids or friends, what a thoughtful thing it would be

to pause and say, "Thank You, God, for the blessings of this day and the bounty of food and goodness You pour out upon us."

Sad to say, but James in his little book put his finger right on the biggest problem with most of our prayer life. "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (James 4:2). Simply, we do not pray. We talk about praying. We write about praying. We sing about praying. We complain about not being allowed to pray, but then when we can, we don't. If we would just get serious about talking to God not only day by day but moment by moment as we face life's challenges and crises and celebrations and get in touch with the Father and pray. I hear people talk about how they are so opposed to the fact that prayer has been removed from the schools. I tend to agree with them, yet on the other hand, I tend to think there is a lot of praying that goes on in school that nobody can stop. I speak for a lot of people who maybe didn't call an all-night prayer vigil, but have sat in a test, staring at algebra problems, and indeed prayed. Or maybe wrestling with a language translation and it will bring you to your knees. Or some chemistry problem and it's not just muttering under your breath when you're trying to get in touch with God that hopefully, prayerfully, He will shake some of your cranial corpuscles and you come up with an answer. Life in its unfolding layers every day provides opportunities for us to get to God, to pray, and to have God answer those prayers.

The author can be contacted at directions@mcb.org.

BIBLIOCRYPTER

GQBQVCEQB, LGVNN EGQ LAY AC TVY

LWE AY EGQ BWDGE GVYO AC EGQ

RAUQB AC DAO.

NMZQ EUQYEP-EUA: LWJEP-YWYQ

Clue: Z = K

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 8:24

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Luter rallies support for new Baptist college

ENNINGTON, Vt. (BP) — Encouraging pastors in one of America's most unreached areas and preaching at the region's new Baptist college were on Fred Luter's agenda when he visited Vermont this month.

Luter, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, spent two days at Northeastern Baptist College in Bennington and met with local Green Mountain Baptist Association pastors. After touring the college's main campus and library facilities, Luter gathered with the executive team and learned about NEBC's vision for preparing students to evangelize the world, especially New England and the rest of the northeast U.S.

NEBC President Mark Ballard said the school was "blessed beyond measure" by Luter's visit.

"He encouraged our students, faculty, staff and local pastors," Ballard said. "What a joy to have this wonderful man of God visit the college in our inaugural year of operation. Fred's leadership as president of the SBC has been great. He is the man for the hour."

NEBC opened last August and now has more than 40 students in its second semester of operation. The college — which has established a partnership with the Baptist Convention of New England and the Green Mountain Association — represents the culmination of Ballard's long-time vision of establishing a Southern Baptist-related college in a region of America that did not have one previously. NEBC's statement of faith is the Baptist Faith & Message 2000.

Located in southern Vermont, Bennington is at the geographic center of the Northeast in Southern Baptist North American Mission Board strategy. According to

On the web

To learn more about NEBC, visit its website at www.nebcvt.org.

NAMB, 67 million people live in the region, which stretches from southern Maryland to the northern tip of Maine, and an estimated 82 percent do not know Christ. One church exists for every 37,000 people in the Northeast.

Southern Baptist teams from at least nine states outside the Northeast helped prepare NEBC's facilities for use. The college shares a former Ramada Inn and Conference Center building with an elementary and secondary Christian school. NEBC uses the third and fourth floors of the building while Grace Christian School is housed on the first two floors.

During his visit, Luter preached in NEBC chapel on "The Ultimate Battle" from John 10:9-11. Acknowledging life's many battles, he said "the greatest battle is between good and evil, between the Lord and Lucifer, between the Savior and Satan, between the divine and the devil ... and the battle is for your soul."

In that battle, Christians have "the Shepherd's provision" of a real relationship with Jesus, Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, said April 22. "The serpent's plan" is to steal, kill and destroy but believers can walk in victory because of "the Shepherd's promise" to give abundant life through the death and resurrection of Jesus, Luter said.

Following chapel, Luter attended a lunch with several pastors from the Green Mountain Baptist Association. Pastor Jerry Frye of Faith Christian Church in Pownal, Vt., said he was "truly blessed by a



SBC President Fred Luter (center left) met with the leadership team of Northeastern Baptist College in Vermont: (from left to right) Dave King, vice president of administration; James Mancuso, vice president of library services; Mark Ballard, president; Brian Harmon, vice president/dean of academics; and Ed Wright, vice president of advancement. (NEBC photo)

brother who has literally been through the storm," referencing Luter's experience when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005. "The source of his powerful preaching is no secret: He is in fellowship with God."

Tim Groos, a student at NEBC, said, "I have never experienced preaching like that. I felt ... with each word he spoke like a child on Christmas morning waiting for the next present to open."

Pastor Phil Steadman of Capstone Baptist Church in North Bennington, Vt., said Luter "personally embodies hope for the future of our convention. From street preacher to a pastor of thousands, he came with a message about Jesus and delivered it passionately, persuasively and powerfully. As a pastor and father I am personally grateful for his leadership as our president. What a privilege to have him come to our front-line region and encourage us."

Luter said his visit to the new college left him committed to place Ballard, the fac-

"After visiting and preaching at this college and hearing about the number of lost people in the Vermont area, and after seeing the hunger for God's Word, I want to challenge every Southern Baptist that is serious about missions to consider visiting, praying for and supporting this school."

In this area of New England, the Scripture comes true, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.'"

Fred Luter

Southern Baptist Convention president

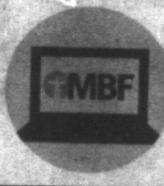
ulty and the students on his daily prayer list.

"After visiting and preaching at this college and hearing about the number of lost people in the Vermont area, and after seeing the hunger for God's Word, I want to challenge every Southern Baptist that is serious about missions to consider visiting, praying for and supporting this school," Luter said. "In this area of New England, the Scripture comes true, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.'"

NEBC offers two bachelor's degrees — one in biblical studies with four tracks, including a church planting/entrepreneurial leadership emphasis, and one in music ministry with three concentrations. The school plans to introduce bachelor's degrees in education, business and biblical counseling in the future.

To learn more about NEBC, visit its website at www.nebcvt.org.

there's still time to apply for scholarships through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation



talk to a live person at 601.292.3210

get more details and complete the application at www.msbf.org before May 31

Just for the Record



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, had their annual Easter egg hunt Apr. 20. Hal Hatten, pastor.



BLUFF SPRINGS CHURCH, PIKE COUNTY, held an Easter sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. with breakfast following.



The GAs from **ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, attended the Mother-Daughter weekend at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center Apr. 4 - 5. There were 27 participants. Lorrie Lofton and Paula Linton, leaders.



CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT, held an Easter egg hunt and fellowship Apr. 12, with storytelling, egg hunting, games, food, and more. Approximately 25 children and several adults attended.



The youth of **NEW SARDIS CHURCH, MIZE**, led the morning worship service Mar. 30.



The preschool choir of **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, performed as part of the Easter Sunday services.



MILITARY CHURCH, SUMRALL, held a ground-breaking for its new multi-purpose building Mar. 30. Shown are David Blakeney, Randy Mauldin, Donna Young, pastor Mike Aultman, Sharon Herren, Roger Farve, and Stacey Aultman.



TOOMSUBA CHURCH, TOOMSUBA, held a community-wide outreach event with 80 attendees at Lake Tom Bailey. The church provided fishing for the children, games for the youth, and hotdogs for all attendees.

In other Church News:

► **Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle**, is sponsoring a pink ribbon event, Tickle Me Pink, May 8, 5:30 p.m. It is for all women and girls 12 and up. The event includes artisan booths, door prizes, cancer survivors and an oncologist.

► **First Church, Waynesboro**, will host the Voices of Mobile in concert May 4, 10:30 a.m. Love offering. Steve Smith, pastor.

► **First Church, Runnels**, is hosting Friday Night Jam for 3rd - 6th graders May 9, 6 - 9 p.m. Music, Nolan Bishop Band; Wes Garner, speaker. Food, fun, fellowship. T-shirts available for \$10 by contacting shannonfreeman28@aol.com or amyto96@gmail.com.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Salem Church, Kemper County:** Homecoming, May 4; services, 10:45 a.m. with singing and worship, followed by potluck dinner on the grounds; bring "old pictures" to share; Jessie Napp, speaker and pastor.

► **New Salem Church, McCall Creek:** Homecoming, May 4, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Mid-South Quartet, music; Troy Burroughs, pastor.

► **Mashulaville Church, Mashulaville:** Memorial services, May 4, 11 a.m., followed by dinner; Tommy Jones, speaker.

► **Liberty Church, Winston County:** 162nd memorial homecoming, May 4; cemetery meeting, 10:30 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by meal; special music; Doug Wise, speaker.

► **Silver Creek Church, McComb:** 200th anniversary celebration, May 3 - 4; Sat., old fashioned games and time of reminiscing, 10 a.m.; lunch, noon; reception for former staff and family and families of deceased staff, 2 p.m.; gospel singing with The Carolina Boys Quartet and others, 4:30 p.m.; Sun., gathering at 9:30 a.m.; services, 10:30 a.m. with a parade of artifacts from years gone by, followed by dinner on the grounds; Matt Buckles, speaker.

► **Trinity Church, Pearl:** Revival, May 4 - 7; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Duane Jones, Arnie Westerfield, Larry Russell, and David McNeill, speakers.

► **Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto:** Homecoming, May 4; lunch following morning worship service; Mike McKee, speaker; Hal Hatten, pastor.

► **Black Hawk Church, Carroll Association:** Homecoming and revival, May 4 - 7; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Gary Tanner, speaker; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Nathan Gorman, speaker; Benny Rigby, music.

► **Grace United Church, Decatur:** Revival, May 4 - 7; Sun., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; services, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Felton, pastor; Michelle Addy, music.

College News



Tommy King, president of **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY**, is shown with WCU retirees Les Stevenson, academic dean of Tradition campus/assistant professor of education, who served 15 years; Sandra Meeler, administrative assistant to the dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine, 20 years; Rebecca Jordan, professor of language and literature, 22 years; Diane Taylor, administrative assistant for advancement and external relations, 29 years, and Billy Brown, professor of business and associate dean of business programs at Tradition campus, 21 years. A reception was held in the retirees' honor on April 16. Each retiree received an inscribed clock as a token of appreciation for their years of service to the university. Not pictured are WCU retirees Paul Cotten, professor of music and psychology, 25 years, and Marcus Steele, chair, department of chemistry and physics, six years.



Chip Wilson, Millington, Tenn., has been elected as president of the **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** Student Government Association. He was SGA vice-president last year and serves in the youth ministry at First Church, Madison.

Staff Changes



Jerome Key, minister of music, **WEST END CHURCH, WEST POINT**, has been called to First Church, Jemison, Ala., after nine-and-a-half years of service.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God, in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins

and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the

grave to forgive my sins and to restore

my relationship with you.

(I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

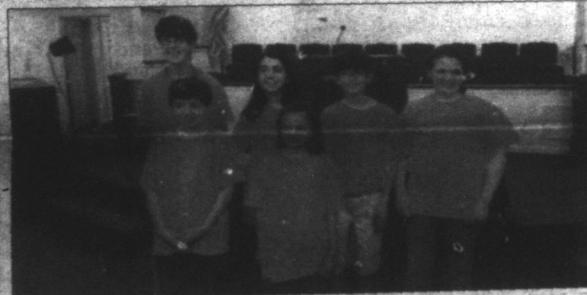
But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Bible Drill



CORINTH CHURCH, MAGEE, recognizes its Bible drillers.



POPE CHURCH, POPE, recognizes its Bible drillers and buddies. First row: Rowan Baker and Anna Grace Sprouse; second row: Ben Rowsey, Anna Baker, Will Rowsey, and Macy Appleton.



FIRST CHURCH, BATESVILLE, recognizes driller Luana Dent, shown with Marcus Peagler, director, Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

STUDENT 2014 SPEAKERS' TOURNAMENT

The Mississippi Baptist State Speakers' Tournament was held Apr. 12 at Parkway Church in Clinton. Winners in the At-Large Division (shown, from left) were Catherine Fedrick, Pleasant Hill Church, Calhoun Association, Second Place; and Matthew Nicholson, Cleary Church, Rankin Association, First Place.

Winners of the Baptist College Division (shown, from left) were Darby Damon, Broad-

moor Church, Metro Association; Ramsey Barber, Pinelake Church, Rankin Association; Jordan Raney, Friendship Church, North Central Association; and Jordan Gaughn, Meadow Grove Church, Rankin Association.

At-Large winners were awarded scholarships to the college of their choice. Baptist college winners were awarded scholarships to either Mississippi College, William Carey University, or Blue Mountain College.



TODD STARNES
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MS POSITIONS

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, MC-COMB, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTRY ASSISTANT/SECRETARY. Please resumes' can be mailed to the church at: 1046 Friendship Cir., McComb, MS 39048, or e-mailed to the church at: friendshipbc815@bellsouth.net.

HOLLY SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR/ PASTOR. If interested please call: 601-833-8437 or 601-935-2239

PATHWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH IN LAUREL (POWERS COMMUNITY) IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Traditional building, fellowship hall, and personage. Contemporary congregation. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Pathway Community Church, 15 Lawhoven Church Rd, Laurel, MS. 39443-9203 For more info, call Mark (601)498-3205

YALE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH IN CLEVELAND, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to Charles E Weeks, 510 University St., Cleveland, Ms. 38732, e-mail cweeks1940@comcast.net

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EUPORA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND ASSOCIATE PASTOR. Learn more about the ministries of FBC Eupora at www.fbceupora.com. Please send your resume to FBC Eupora, ATTN: Minister of Music Committee, P.O. Box 268, Eupora, MS 39744.

SCOTLAND BAPTIST CHURCH, WINONA, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please e-mail resumes to: hswaller@gmail.com or call 662-417-0869 for more information.

ENTERPRISE BAPTIST CHURCH (CLARKE COUNTY) IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS/RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF SUMMER STUDENT MINISTER (mid-May through mid-August). Email resumes to enterprisebaptist@att.net or mail to Enterprise Baptist Church, PO Box 186, Enterprise, MS 39330.

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBUS, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME (25 HOUR WORK WEEK) MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Please e-mail resume to office@mzbaptist.com or mail to: Mt Zion Baptist Church, 1791 Lake Lowndes Road, Columbus, MS 39702.

HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PIANIST to play for morning and evening worship and weekly choir rehearsal. Will work closely with Pastor and Worship Leader to plan worship services. Email resumes to hebronbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Hebron Baptist, 4795 Vimville Causeyville Rd., Meridian, MS 39301.

LEMOYNE BOULEVARD BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING PERMANENT PASTOR. Please send resumes to: LBBC Pastor Search Committee, 15005 Lemoine Blvd., Biloxi, MS 39532

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BROOKLYN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A YEAR ROUND BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH PASTOR. Please send resumes to: alien@flowlerslaw.net

LONGVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH (PONTOTOC COUNTY) PRAYERFULLY SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Please send resumes to Longview Baptist Church c/o Pastor Search Committee 406 Dozier Hill Rd Belden, MS 38826.

Chaplains: Cards effective tool in military circles

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP) — Could something as simple as chaplain prayer cards really make a difference in ministry? Ask Greg Smith.

One day last summer Smith, who pastors Grace on the Ashley Church in Charleston, S.C., was looking through a set of chaplain prayer cards received from the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Each card highlighted the ministry of a Southern Baptist military chaplain and listed prayer requests for him.

"When I got to the last card I said, 'Look, I know Tim,'" Smith said. The face on the last card in the set belonged to U.S. Army Chaplain Maj. Tim Wilson. The two men had been friends in college. Seeing Wilson's card made Smith wonder if he could be a military chaplain as well.

"I immediately thought I was too old and I have no military background, but the idea would not leave me. I talked to my wife and she said, 'I think that's a great idea,'" Smith said.

Church staff and leadership encouraged him to pursue the idea, too, along with members of Grace. Smith thought it was a long shot, but he applied. Every-

thing fell into place. On Christmas Eve 2013 he was sworn in as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in the naval reserve. Smith and Wilson have corresponded by email since then and hope to reunite soon.

Beyond the goal of having Southern Baptists pray for chaplains, last year's prayer card mailing has had a far-reaching impact on chaplains and churches alike.

"There has been an absolutely positive response from both chaplains who have received support and from Southern Baptists who have expressed gratitude for gaining a greater appreciation for their chaplains and the roles they fulfill, especially their evangelistic ministries," Doug Carver, NAMB's executive director for chaplaincy and a retired U.S. Army Major General, said. "The prayer cards certainly met the intent of our goal to create a vehicle for communication between chaplains and churches and to keep chaplains connected with churches."

A new set of 50 military chaplain prayer cards will arrive at Southern Baptist churches in time for distribution before Memorial Day. Additional cards may be ob-



CHAPLAINS AT WORK — Chaplain Cpt. Barry "Hoot" Busby (left), serving at Fort Bragg, N.C., home of the 82nd Airborne Division, meets with troops preparing for a training jump. Prayer for men like Busby "increases the effectiveness of chaplains as they serve," said Doug Carver, North American Mission Board executive director for chaplaincy. (BP photo courtesy of NAMB)

tained by calling (866) 407-6262, or visiting nambstore.com.

"As soon as the prayer card packs went out last year, I began to receive emails and then notes and cards," chaplain Endel Lee said. "I received more than 150

messages from people who were praying for me, and that is just from the people who took the time to send me something. Pastors told me they handed out the cards at prayer meetings. I heard from people who kept the cards

in their homes and in their cars to remember to pray for me."

Lee, who serves as NAMB's military chaplaincy church planting catalyst, said he needed the specific prayer because he was on a deployment in Djibouti, a nation that is 94 percent Muslim. "It is not the most dangerous place I have ever served, but it was a hostile environment. It was a tremendous encouragement to me to know people were praying for me."

After seeing Lee's prayer card one prayer group contacted him asking how they could support him. Was there something they could send? Bibles was Lee's answer.

"They sent two boxes of Bibles, not small paperbacks, but nice Bibles. I gave all of them away before I left. As I discipled people, I asked them if they had a Bible of their own. When they told me they did not, I was able to present them with one of the Bibles the [prayer group] sent," Lee said.

"The prayer cards are a meaningful symbol of the support of Southern Baptists and the prayer coverage they provide for chaplains," Carver said. "That prayer increases the effectiveness of chaplains as they serve."

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mcb.org.

New book asserts Bible permits homosexuality, same sex marriage

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — A new book's "exceedingly dangerous" assertions that homosexual orientation and same sex marriage are consistent with a high view of the Bible are refuted by Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., and four of his colleagues at in an e-book published April 22.

God and the Gay Christian? A Response to Matthew Vines, was released the same day as the official release of Vines' volume, God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships, which has garnered significant attention.

An April 22 blog post by Mohler asserts that Vines' interpretation of Scripture is driven by his experience as a homosexual rather than the normal rules for understanding written documents.

"When he begins his book, Matthew Vines argues that experience should not drive our interpretation of the Bible," Mohler writes, "but it is his experience of what he calls a gay sexual orientation that drives every word of this book."

"It is this experiential issue that drives him to relativize text after text and to argue that the Bible really doesn't speak directly to his sexual identity at all, since the inspired human authors of Scripture were ignorant of the modern gay experience."

A review of Vines' book by

Andrew Walker of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) argues that "Vines has compiled liberal biblical scholarship and popularized it for a non-technical audience."

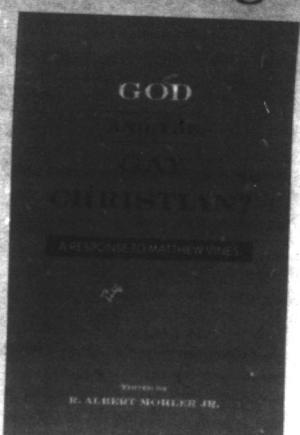
Walker's review, published on the ERLC's Canon & Culture website, summarizes the book in detail and includes bulleted arguments for pastors to use as they discuss "God and the Gay Christian" with church members.

Vines, a 24-year-old former Harvard student, weaves with his treatment of Scripture his personal biography of growing up as an evangelical Christian and "coming out" as a homosexual to his parents and now former home church.

In the process, Vines left Harvard in order to study the Bible's claims about homosexuality, which later resulted in the publication of his book.

"Not every book deserves a response, but some books seem to appear at a time and context in which response is absolutely necessary," Mohler told Southern Seminary News. "The kind of argument that is presented by Matthew Vines, if not confronted, can lead many people to believe that his case is persuasive and that his treatment of the Bible is legitimate."

"I think that it's very important that evangelicals be reminded that the church has not misunderstood Scripture for 2,000 years."



Vines' argument is "exceedingly dangerous because if we do not know what the Bible teaches on homosexuality, and if the church has misunderstood that vital issue for two millennia, then what else has the church misunderstood about the Gospel?" Mohler asked.

"If we can't trust the Bible to tell us what sin is in order to tell us why Christ's death was necessary, then we really don't know what the Gospel is. And if you can read the Bible the way Matthew Vines reads it, then biblical theology is impossible. I cannot imagine greater challenges facing the church than these."

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Live in Moral Purity • Proverbs 5:3-14, 20-23; 6:23-24, 27-29, 32-34

One subject that is talked about on a regular basis in our society is the moral decay of our country. Many try to hide the truth by placing this issue under the guise of our right to be free to live as we please. Proverbs is very plain in its stance on morality, especially in the area of sexual moral purity. Many of you who will be teaching this lesson may believe this issue no longer affects you, but if you have grandchildren and great-grandchildren, you need to be ready to take your stand and influence them in the right direction. These passages deal mainly with the issue of sexual purity, but the implications of the standard God has set carries over into other areas which include dishonesty, lying, cheating, stealing, and taking unfair advantage of others. I am reminded of the reason God gave us the book of Proverbs, stated in Proverbs 1:2-4. It was given to us so that we can gain wisdom and understanding in order to live Godly lives and not be taken in by sins of satisfaction and happiness.

Bitter Deception (Proverbs 5:3-6)

Proverbs often refers to the "path of life." Its reference is to remind us that we have a choice to make in the direction our lives are going. There is a path that leads to heaven and a path that leads to separation from God forever- hell! The bitter decep-

tion of sexual immorality is that it seems so attractive and deceives us into believing that it will satisfy all our needs. The truth is it will destroy not only our human relationships, but also our relationship with God. Verse six tells us that "she," referring to sexual immorality, is not even aware herself that her "ways are unstable." It is the blind leading the blind. The choice we have to make is to not follow her path, but to follow the "path of life" God has set before us. We do that by applying God's wisdom in our lives. We study God's word and we learn how to protect ourselves from her bitter deception.



Utter Downfall (Proverbs 5:7-14)

The results of our not heeding God's instructions are highlighted in verses 9-14. If we choose to allow ourselves to get involved in an immoral relationship, we will suffer the consequences of our choice. Those consequences include the loss of physical vitality and our youthful

years. Monetarily, we lose the resources with which we have been blessed. We also lose our integrity and good standing in our community. We wind up with a life full of regrets when we allow ourselves to fall into sexual immorality. Our life ends up being a life that does not point people to Jesus.

Enlightened Direction

(Proverbs 5:20-23; 6:23-24)

When we consider the proper place for our sexual relationship, the Bible always places it in the context of marriage. The application of Godly wisdom is for us to honor our marriage relationship by

being faithful to our wife or husband. Allowing ourselves to be seduced into an immoral relationship destroys the trust our mate has placed in us, and it weakens or destroys our relationship with our Heavenly Father. God sees man's ways and He knows the path we have chosen. Through His Word He gives us instructions and

warnings that are for our own good. It seems that we see many people who have chosen not to apply God's wisdom in their lives. They seem to be doing just fine, but rest assured that the Lord will hold them accountable for their choices, just as He will hold us accountable.

Dreadful Disgrace

(Proverbs 6:27-29, 32-34)

Because of the moral decay we are experiencing in our world today, what the Bible describes as unacceptable, immoral relationships the world sees as perfectly acceptable lifestyles. The world has left God's standards and set its own standards. God's standards have not changed and still view acts of sexual immorality as acts of folly that result in disgrace and disaster. (6:33) Proverbs 6:32 says a person who commits adultery "lacks sense," and "so destroys himself." How plainly and simply God's wisdom is explained to us. The application of Godly wisdom in our lives includes our obeying the biblical standards God has set for us. Our disobedience will result in the disgrace that immorality brings.

Dedmon is Associate Pastor for Education and Outreach, Brandon Church, Brandon.

Hope Personified • Luke 15:11-32

Here's Hope! Take Heart! Stop Running! Turn Around! Hope has a heart and a face! You have a Heavenly Father and He loves you! No matter where you've been, no matter what you've done, no matter how far away you have wandered, no matter how far you have fallen and no matter who saw it all happen, your loving Father is watching and waiting for you to come HOME. His love and forgiveness coupled with your confession and repentance can fix you.

Most people, even those who don't usually read the Bible, have heard the parable of the prodigal son. Movie plots with variations on that theme are myriad. The luscious green pastures in the 23rd Psalm are rest for the weary soul. The written-in-red lost and found words in Luke 15 are rest for the weary heart. This three-part story is brought to you by the loving words of Jesus Who came to show a wandering/squandered world the heart of His Father.

First, The Master Story Teller grabs our attention with a lost sheep being found by its searching shepherd. Next, with precision, Jesus bends the theme toward a lost coin being found by its searching owner, the lady of the house. That listening crowd filled with Pharisees collectively shrugged shoulders and shuffled feet. Sheep always manage to wander off. Ignorance. Women

always manage to lose stuff. Negligence. Lost is lost. Found is found. So what? Finally, in spite of their skepticism, they lean in a little bit closer as Jesus stories them straight into the truth about themselves and the Father Who was (and still is!) waiting for their return. "A certain man had two sons..." We usually focus on those two sons, but this coming Lord's Day, we will see Our Father through that father.

The younger son basically declares his father dead by demanding his inheritance in advance. The Pharisees would be horrified at that part of the story. This father in effect "laid down" his life for his son. All of us Pharisees need to be reminded that ever since Day Six, The Father has given us the freedom of making our own fruit selections. Verse 13 says that the boy stayed on a few days before departing for the far country. He had plenty of time to rethink his decision and

choose the fruit of better consequences.

"Prodigal" does not mean runaway wanderer. It means wasteful squanderer. His father had every right to disown him. Bill Cosby said to his son (in jest): "I brought you into this world and I can take you out!" God had that same choice and He chose LOVE, the first fruit of the Spirit. The willingness of God to love and let go led Jesus all the way to Calvary.

His father had done these things for him:



gave him life, provided for all his needs, cared for him when he was defenseless, taught him all he knew then, allowed him

to choose his own path. When the son chose the far country, the father did not fetch him, forcing his return, though he longed to do that. His father is described with action verbs. He waited. He watched. He saw. He felt compassion. He ran. He embraced. He kissed. He heard the confession of his son. He rejoiced at the son's return and

welcomed him home. He did not remind him of his past failures, but celebrated his homecoming. This father accepted the son who had determined to die to himself.

I can see that father peering out that same window day after day after aching day. The kitchen windows faced the road and they were propped open with a stick. The curtains were tattered and stained with greasy fingerprints. There was a well-worn path leading from the front gate to the tree standing at the crossroads. The shade of that tree provided a great view down the road leading to the far country. There were deep footprints of an outgoing walker filled with energy and great expectations. There were flat footprints of returning sandals dragging in the dust, sliding slowly back home.

This very same story is being lived out today as The Father waits for us to return to Him. Even on the cross, His Jesus arms were spread open wide! The son who was lost (assumed dead and destroyed) was found (discovered alive and well). Why not come back home and find yourself being FOUND!

Brown is staff evangelist at First Church, Richland

GARAYWA

cont. from p. 1

an equipment shed for our ropes course - a twelve-by-twelve shed with a twelve-by-twelve deck."

When asked about the upcoming summer camping schedule, camp director Jessica Morrison said, "It's coming!"

"We still need a few more cabin leaders," Morrison said. "Our theme this summer is, 'Truth Seekers,' and our theme verse is Ephesians 1:13 which talks about

us knowing the truth of the gospel of our salvation and how He seals us with the Holy Spirit.

"We'll study that verse, and we'll pull in some verses from Romans in our Bible study. We'll talk about what truth is, how we know something is true, what it means to believe, and how believing is an action and not just a head thing.

"We'll talk about what it means to be 'sealed,' and how once you're sealed nothing can take that away. We'll talk about how to actively seek truth and what to do with the truth that you've learned."

The Mississippi Baptist encampment can accommodate 252 girls. "There are six full weeks of camp this summer," Morrison said, "and we'll probably completely fill up four of those weeks. The other weeks will be a little less, but 150 or more."

Garaywa will also host a day camp July 21-23. "Last year we had an average of about 70 a day, and we think it will grow this year," Morrison stated. "This is open to boys and girls, grades one through six."

Garaywa offers a varied pro-

gram. "We're a typical outdoor camp," Morrison continued. "Anything you can think of that you liked to do or wanted to do, we do. We have crafts, a zipline, ropes, swimming, and other recreation. We're unique in that we're girls only, and we have a strong focus on missions."

"We can speak truth the girls won't hear in the world. They get so much time with the missionaries. By the time the girls leave on Friday, they will have heard at least a hundred times that if they believe in Jesus, that

their mission is to go and share with others."

Camps are open to girls in the third through sixth grades, and there are two weeks offered for girls in the seventh through twelfth grades.

"The girls have a blast," Reed said. "I was at a conference in Choctaw County a while back, and pastor Randy Bridges at French Camp Church called me to come speak. His daughter is a big Garaywa person, and she was so excited to get to come. I hear that all the time."

Students responsive to key roles with NAMB

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Austin Coleman doesn't have to think long when asked about the impact of a summer in New York City as a North American Mission Board student missionary.

"It changed the direction of my life," the Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary student said.

Coleman was among 1,200-plus students who served last summer with NAMB's Generation Send — a 10-week internship to immerse young people in ministry, missions and church planting in an urban context.

"It opened my eyes," Coleman said. "I have felt a call to church planting for years, but not until I got to New York did I sense an urgency to that."

This year, NAMB is celebrating the large number of young people who want to serve as student missionaries. The student missionary program has seen explosive growth since NAMB gave the program a top-to-bottom redesign in 2012.

In 2010 NAMB placed about 600 student missionaries on the field. By 2012 — the year NAMB redesigned the role — the number had grown to more than 1,100. In 2013 more than 1,200 students participated. So far this year 2,000 students have been approved to serve.

"The response has been remarkable," NAMB President Kevin Ezell said. "It is so encouraging to see so many students who want to serve. But the challenge is our funds are finite and we have reached our maximum budget for 2014."

NAMB planned and budgeted for 2,000 student missionaries for 2014, and all of those budgeted spots have been filled. NAMB will begin considering new applications at the beginning of its fiscal year in October.

The redesigned student missionary role makes it more purposeful and geared toward training students for future ministry service. Student missionaries are now directly connected with NAMB's Send North America strategy, which emphasizes church planting in, or near, large cities.

Student missionaries are part of NAMB's "Farm System," which is designed to discover, develop and deploy the next generation of Southern Baptist missionaries and church leaders. To support its goal of helping Southern Baptists start 15,000 new churches over a 10-year period, NAMB is increasing efforts to recruit for the Farm System.

"We need 1,500 new church planters each year, and many of them will have to come through the Farm System," Ezell said. "We want tomorrow's missionaries to be the best we've ever put on the field. That means we need to recruit the best, and they need to be well-trained and equipped."

Student missionaries are the beginning point of our process. If we can't expand these numbers, it will put a lid on the number of church planters who will be available to meet the goal of 15,000 new churches in 10 years," Ezell said.

NAMB is able to deploy student missionaries because of the sacrificial gifts Southern Baptists give to the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. NAMB can send an additional 1,000 student missionaries for every \$2.5 million more given to the Annie Armstrong Offering.

To learn more about NAMB's student missionary role, visit <http://www.namb.net/mobilize-me>.



READY TO SERVE — Students with the North American Mission Board's internship, Generation Send, are shown with the New York City skyline in the background. In 2013 more than 1,200 students participated in the ministry. So far this year 2,000 students have been approved to serve.



PATH OF DESTRUCTION — A large tornado leveled much of the town of Mayflower, Ark., a suburb of Little Rock, Sunday. At least 15 people were killed by the outbreak of storms. (Screen capture from FoxNews.com)

So. Baptist volunteers respond to weekend tornadoes in Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP) — As residents of the South and Midwest braced for violent storms Monday (April 28), Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers were already responding to weekend tornadoes in Arkansas, Oklahoma and other states.

Tornadoes Sunday (April 27) killed 15 or more people according to various media reports and cut a 100-mile path of destruction through Arkansas. Much of the damage happened as darkness fell, making it difficult to fully assess damage and fatalities.

The hardest hit area in the suburbs of Little Rock was the focus of continued search and recovery efforts Monday as SBDR volunteers prepared to serve hot meals to rescuers and storm survivors.

"We have dispatched one feeding unit to Vilonia (north of Little Rock) to prepare meals for the search and rescue crew and the first responders," Joe Garner, state Disaster Relief director for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said. "This is still an active search and recovery operation, so we will continue to assess the situation and expect to be able to begin sending in teams in the next day or two. We are attempting to get an idea of what we will be facing and put our arms around how we will begin to serve."

The feeding unit, located at Beryl Baptist Church of Vilonia, is expected to begin serving meals Monday evening, said J.D. "Sonny" Tucker, ABSC executive director.

"Our disaster relief units are on the ground and others are waiting for notifications from local authorities," Tucker said. "Arkansas Baptists will be a part of rebuilding lives and reestablishing hope. Our hearts and prayers go out to those affected by the storms."

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J.D. "Sonny" Tucker
ABSC executive director

In addition to the feeding unit, several Arkansas chainsaw disaster relief units have been put on alert, but are not being allowed in the affected areas at this time since search and rescue operations are ongoing.

Arkansas convention leaders are partnering with local churches to collect "buckets of love," consisting of a plastic five-gallon bucket packed with items useful to survivors. For more information about bucket items, go to www.absc.org and click on the "Buckets of Love" button.

SBDR volunteers will transport supplies to victims that include roofing tarp, wood strips and bottled water.

"We will be assisting Joe Garner in the assessment and then provide whatever help is needed," Fritz Wilson, North American Mission Board disaster relief team executive director, said. "It looks like Oklahoma will likely handle their response in state. Mis-

souri may provide some assistance in Kansas. The state convention disaster relief warehouse in Jefferson City, Mo., is a staging area for DR supplies."

The storms were the worst to date this spring, impacting communities struck by tornadoes only three years ago.

In related outreach, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, fellow churches and various faith-based groups and companies have partnered to produce a documentary focusing on God's compassion in the face of natural disasters.

"Where Was God? Stories of Hope After the Storm," will premiere May 16 at the Moore Warren Theater in Moore, Okla. Showings will be available throughout the country via the documentary's website at <http://wherewasgod.com>.

"Our goal with this film is to showcase faith, hope and the ability to overcome after life's storms — whether they be literal or figurative," Steven Earp, the film's executive producer and lead pastor at Elevate Church in Oklahoma City, said.

NAMB coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state Disaster Relief ministries.

Southern Baptists have 82,000 trained volunteers — including chaplains — and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chainsaw, mud-out, command, communication, child care, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild and power generation. SBDR is one of the three largest mobilizers of trained disaster relief volunteers in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.